

Board Honors Marla Wood for Dedicated Service



Becky Ivester (left) shared with the SEMO Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors the news of Marla Wood's retirement. The Board recognized and expressed gratitude for her dedicated service since May 24, 1993. Marla has been instrumental in executive management, human resources, benefits, and ensuring GoSEMO Fiber subscriber satisfaction.



For 2025, SEMO Electric Cooperative's senior leadership group presented key goals to the Board, focusing on safety, reliability, growth, and operational excellence. Goals include achieving zero lost time accidents, completing successful contract negotiations, and maintaining expenses within budget. Operational objectives target 99.95% reliability, O&M within +/- 5% of budget, a 15% inventory reduction, and prioritizing third-party accident cost recovery. Growth initiatives aim for a 4% increase in new subscribers, hosting six community events, and completing 2,000 appreciation calls/cards. Additional efforts include implementing new tools, refining processes, and exceeding expectations for NRECA's 2025 Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program, while supporting team development and enhancing satisfaction.

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of SEMO Electric Cooperative, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as the "Cooperative"), was held on Monday, December 16, 2024, at the office of the Cooperative in Sikeston, Missouri. The meeting was called to order at 12:40 p.m. by President Rick Faulkner. The following Directors were present: Faulkner, James Deneke, Carl Eftink, John Bledsoe, Myron Hawes, Tim Coppage, Carla Moore, Dicky Hanor, Keith Haynes, Dennis Fowler, Field LaPlant, and Von Priggel. Directors absent: none. Also present were Sean Vanslyke, CEO/General Manager; Megan McCord, Attorney for the Cooperative; and staff members Chris Freed, Becky Ivester, Marla Wood, Loyd Rice, Ron Montgomery, Dannett Cooper, Brad Milam, Amanda Burnett, and Angie Byford. A prayer of invocation was offered by Coppage.

The chair asked for approval of the agenda. On a motion made and passed, the agenda was approved. The Board considered its consent agenda, which consisted of the following: the minutes of the regular meeting of November 15, 2024; new membership applications; membership cancellations; the initial review of Policy 102 – Duties, Authority, Responsibility of Directors; and the initial review of Policy 103 – Director's Per Diem, Insurance, and Other Benefits. Montgomery presented the monthly safety report on walking safely on snow and ice. Under old business, the Board reviewed its schedule of meetings and confirmed registrations for attendance. The Board approved the updated Policy 424 – RUS Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant Program (REDLG); approved the review of Policy 101 – Policy Origin and Approval; and approved the 2025 budget.

Under new business, the Board reviewed and discussed district updates. Burnett presented the 2024 bad debt write-off, and the Board reviewed and completed its annual conflicts of interest certification. The Board approved state and federal voting delegates for 2025, appointing Haynes as the NRECA voting delegate with Vanslyke as the alternate. Vanslyke discussed rules on campaigning at the 2025 Annual Meeting, set for May 15, and potential bylaw amendments. Directors reviewed a list of nominating committee members.

Ivester shared with the Board of employee Marla Wood's upcoming retirement and thanked her for her long service to the Cooperative. Members of the executive leadership team shared the three measurable goals they have established for each department in 2025. Directors reviewed a video compilation of the Cooperative's activities over the past year.

Burnett reviewed the financial summary for November 2024, including a revenue and expense analysis and budget comparisons. Compared to the budget, year-to-date revenue was down 2.91%, expenses were down 7.28%, and power costs were up 1.93%. On a motion made, seconded, and passed, the Board accepted the financial report.

Eftink reported on the M&A Electric (Transmission) Power Cooperative meeting, highlighting finances, sales, and reliability. Haynes reported on business from the Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives' (AMEC) meeting, noting items of interest such as social media and SEMO Electric's High Voltage Awards for communication from AMEC.

The Board entered Executive Session to discuss legal and personnel matters. The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.